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A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, TORONTO,

ON THE

THIRTIETH DAY OF NOVEMBER, 1838,

(St. Andrew's Day.)

BY THE

REV. W. T. LEACH, M. A. EDIN.,

Minister of that Church, and Chaplain to Saint Andrew's Society, Toronto.

TORONTO:

PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE BRITISH COLONIST,

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TO THE REV. W. T. LEACH,

Sir,—The Members of the Societies of St. Patrick and St. George, having listened with great satisfaction to the Sermon delivered by you on St. Andrew's Day, most respectfully request that you will be pleased to publish the same.

R. B. SULLIVAN, *President St. Patrick's Society.*

ALEX. DIXON, *Vice-President St. Patrick's Society.*

JOHN KING, M. D., *Vice-President St. Patrick's Society.*

W. B. JARVIS, *Vice-President St. George's Society.*

GEORGE P. RIDOUT, *Vice-President St. George's Society.*

**TO THE PRESIDENTS, THE VICE-PRESIDENTS AND MEMBERS
OF THE**

St. Patrick's, the St. George's, and the St. Andrew's Societies.

GENTLEMEN,—

Since it has pleased you to express your satisfaction with the Discourse delivered before you in St. Andrew's Church, on St. Andrew's Day, and to request the publication of it, and as it would ill become any one, however diffident and sensible of defects in a performance of this kind, to withhold what may be thought useful in a matter which at this moment is *paramount* in the thoughts of every right-hearted person—his country's good—to YOU this Discourse

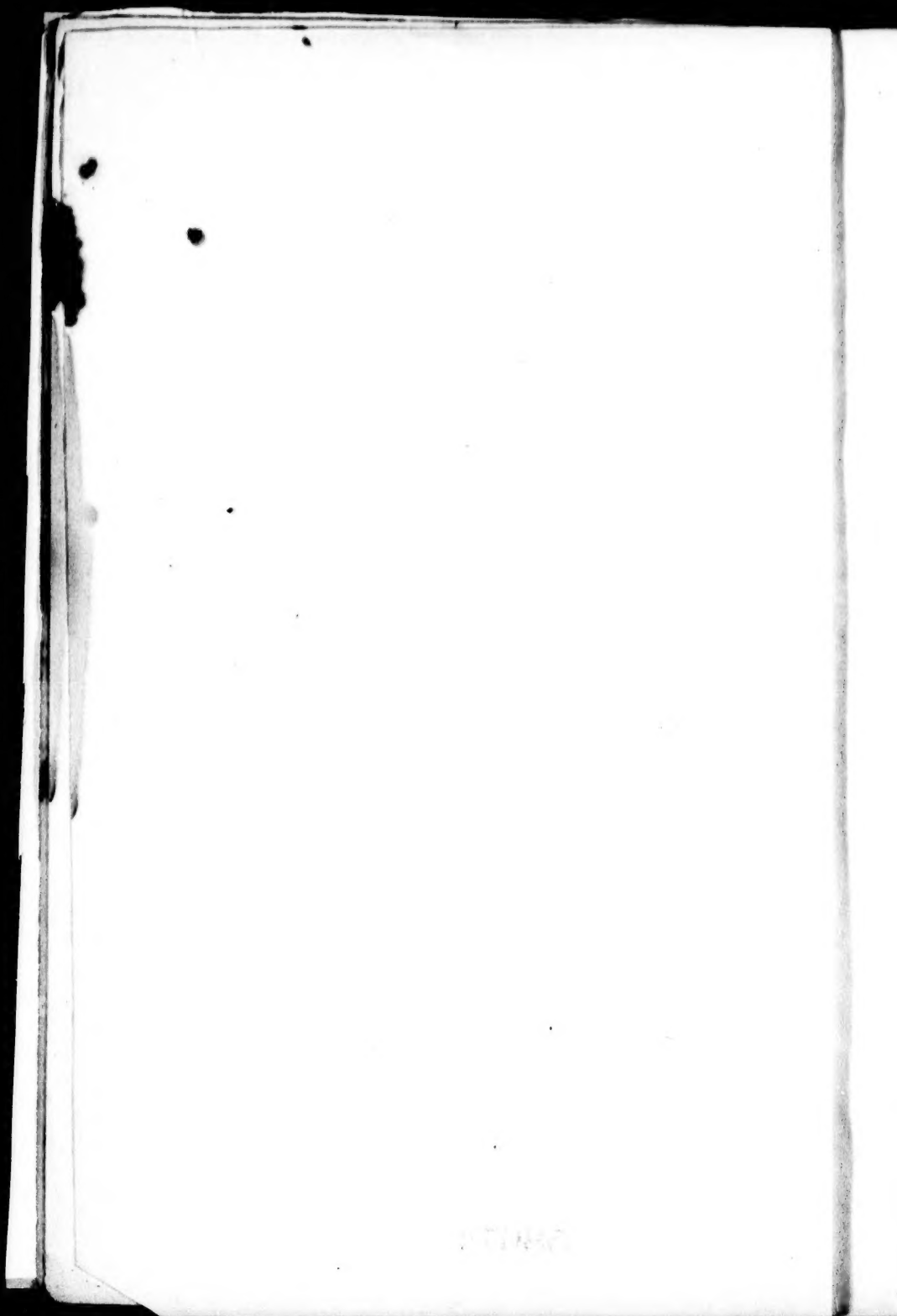
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

By your most obedient servant,

And affectionate friend,

WILLIAM T. LEACH.

Toronto, December 8, 1838.



DISCOURSE.

JUDGES, XXI, 25.—“In those days there was no King in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”

MY CHRISTIAN BRETHERN,

These words are now selected for the matter of our meditation, not because they are precisely applicable to our present circumstances, nor because you, the members of the Saint Andrew's Society, require the lesson which the exposition of them would administer; but for the establishment of our own principles, for the fortification of those habits of social order and subordination, and love of public security which it has been the effect of those institutions which have moulded the Scottish character to produce, it may, nevertheless, be profitable to have them brought under serious consideration. We who inherit the blessings, do not always sufficiently appreciate the wisdom that opened the avenues through which they have been derived upon us; but we may rest assured, though we refuse to confess it, or even little know it, that the social virtues which used to distinguish the natives of the northern part of Great Britain, were the product of much laborious and persevering reflection on the part of those who, amidst the wild waves of internal strife, wrought out the institutions under whose plastic or fashioning power we grew. They were the *constructives* of the destiny of future generations, at a time when the securities of peace and the elements of national felicity and greatness were scattered about and trodden upon like the half

burnt bones of a dead martyr. To revive within you at this present your hereditary persuasion of the necessity of *law*, your humble and voluntary submission to the restraint of constitutional authority, and to deepen, if possible, your innate horror of that abominable mixture of tyranny and anarchy which in these parts of the world is denominated *Lynch Law*, we, who in these times often hardly know which is the duty, to be silent for the sake of peace, or to speak out for the sake of truth, may perhaps be excused if transgressing, for a few minutes, the sphere of the spiritual to which it is our ordinary aim to attract you, condescend upon those things which more immediately touch our flesh and our bones, our obligations as citizens.

Had we, each and all of us, nothing else to do than to do what is right in our own eyes, without reference to the rights and happiness of others, there were the less need of any suggestions upon this subject. There are those, it seems, both in this country and neighbourhood, who consider such a state of affairs extremely desirable. Happy days, they say of the past, when there was no King in Israel, and when every man did what was right in his own eyes; and they are the prophets of happy days in the future, when neither Queen nor King, nor any constitutional authority shall interpose a barrier between them and the possession of *any* object that may happen to seem right in their eyes. As to the past, we know for certain that the era concerning which the assertion in the text is made by the historian, was anything but an illustration of social happiness or national prosperity. There was war with the Philistines, and civil war; wrongs perpetrated publicly by the multitude, and secretly by individuals; private and public treachery; a very general declension into the practice of idolatry. The Levite became priest of the graven and molten image; ravage, ravishment, revenge and blood-thirstiness were the horrid offspring of anarchy, that prolific mother of evil. The framework of the Jewish polity was thus shattered and broken, though constructed after the design, and by the hand of heaven. What with the contagion of heathen example—what with the direct artifices which the heathen applied to foster their disunion—and what with the new temptations which their

conquest of the land of Canaan presented to their passions, they became nearly "custom-struck" of all those sublime and heavenly aspirations which it had been the object of their former rulers and inspired priesthood to create, in order to render them the choice people of God ; a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Their enemies succeeded, no doubt with their own concurrence, in destroying their respect for and patience of the restraints which Heaven had imposed upon them ; and then rushed out, like the winds from the cave of Æolus, the pent-up passions that laid waste so many of the cities and vineyards of Canaan. When they had destroyed the impalpable and spiritual power that made them *one*, they became *many*—had separate interests, which the more they pursued them, the more they became dissevered. Their nationality and patriotism were nearly lost and gone ; and every man fighting for his own hand, and doing what was right in his own eyes, as a natural consequence, they commenced to destroy one another. There was diversity of religion ; there was utter confusion in their ideas respecting the rights of property ; the criminal jumped into the chair of the judge ; and the body politic became instinct with the spirit of destructiveness, and tortured for a time with the throes of death. Happy days, indeed, when there was no King in Israel, and every man did what was right in his own eyes!

That this is not an inaccurate and exceptionable account of the times alluded to, they who read it may take the sacred narrative for a warrant. Indeed, all history, sacred and profane, is an exemplification of the fact that these effects are invariably consequent upon the popular and general negation of a constitutional Government. It is true that the form which arbitrary power may assume, and the manner in which it may be exercised, may be so pernicious and absurd, so abhorrent to humanity and adverse to national character, that nature will *reclaim* her children, and prefer exposing them naked to her own savage wastes and barren rocks, to the suckling of them at the udder of a monster ; but this, happily, is a matter with which we have nothing to do, regarding which we have nothing to fear. All the wisdom of the world has been exerted

in providing securities for human happiness, and of all these securities we have unquestionably the best. The only *danger* to be apprehended is, that we, as a people, cannot appreciate, and therefore refuse to enjoy, our own felicities. Wiser things have been done for us, the inhabitants of Canada, than we will either believe or dispose ourselves to take advantage of. The democratic spirit has become over-active; it has become destructive.

On our last anniversary this effect was foreseen by many of you here present. You were aware that a number of persons in the Province then anticipated, from the application of the Constitution under which we live, many indefinite evils. They supposed themselves liable to suffer various calamities, from the tyranny or wickedness of those who administered it. They imagined themselves to feel evils that had no existence; and with an adroit readiness of interpretation, imputed every failure of what was right in their own eyes, to studied opposition to public interests and systematic malevolence. The consequence of all which has been, that such extensive and vigorous efforts have been made for the subversion of our Constitution, and another so proposed for acceptance, such as is right not in our eyes, who are the party most interested in its suitableness, but in theirs and their adherents, that this poor country at every point of contact with that territory in which they have found or taken an asylum, lies bleeding in every member.

It is creditable to the character, and fortunate in the circumstances of the Colony, that wherever Rebellion has seen the light, in the acts of open violence, it has been instantly quelled. The spirit of order and constructiveness, which is the architect of all the civil relations of men, as well as the mason of their habitations, has hitherto excluded and put to flight the rats and wolves that beset the foundations of the Constitution; and the fact of this is indicative of the patience of the public character to submit to the restraints of law and government. They are conservatives still. They are willing to forego the barbarous opportunity of doing, every man what is right in his own eyes, a principle, or rather we should say,

an abandonment of principle, which conducted the Jews to the brink of destruction, and nearly delivered them up a prey to the Philistines and other heathen tribes, that infested their borders. The same unheavenly angel has disturbed our waters, and may again roll upon us its waves like a flood, unless the conservative spirit and good sense of the community, oppose a barrier, and a higher moral law than we yet possess be begotten in the public character. For nothing *else* can be found sufficient to make men submissive to the restraints of law. But for this the institution of property would be smashed in a moment, in every country where the mass and majority were not in possession of it. The very existence of society, far more the high improvement and spiritual elevation of men to all good and divine arts, depends upon their voluntary or involuntary *desertion* of the rule, "to *do* every man what is right in his own eyes." This submission to restraint upon self-will and passion, may be described, first of all, as a matter of absolute necessity. Two men cannot exist in companionship without acquiescing more or less one in the desires of the other. They could neither hunt together, nor plough, nor sow, without allowing, the allowance they expect. They must permit some restraint to be imposed upon the utter selfishness of their own desires, if they are to live in company, and wish to enjoy any fair correspondence with each other—any goodly interest in one another's blessings. Even in the rudest forms of life, were this mutual restraint not submitted to, society would disband, and man be no longer a gregarious creature but a solitary savage. His race would become extinct from the time that it began its being, as if dropped from the hand of its creator a thing not intended, but accidental, and unworthy of continuance among the works of God.

Not only is this restraint a matter of perfect necessity in regard to the existence of the human being; it is no less necessary to their social well-being. Wherever laws and constitutions are, there it is indispensable. To whatever civilizes or polishes the rudeness of human nature, it must lend itself liberally. Every flourishing state of human affairs, every state of human nature that looks to perfection—all their delightful prospects, and all the charm of their beauty,

is to be hoped for and expected, not by letting loose as the wind that bloweth where it listeth, the selfish will of every human creature—not by proclaiming a day of jubilee and frolic for the infernal passions that lurk in the heart of every wicked man, but by imposing and by bearing willingly and cheerfully such restraints as shall act as a terror to evil doers, and leave room for the praise of them that do well.

Hence arise various degrees of subordination. If men are to be governed by a rule, some persons must make it their business to see that the rule be applied. If men are to be governed by a Constitution, some persons must be invested with power to protect and administer it. It is thus that the good of all is sought for, that the interest and prosperity of the whole are aimed at. It is thus that we are saved from each other's violence—that all the blessings of social and civil life are secured—that no man can make it his pleasure to destroy us, or his triumph to torment us. But if every man did what was right in his own eyes, it is easy to see that stranget hings would be done; and yet, *vae nobis*, such has certainly been the tendency, and still is, too much the tendency of the public mind, in this once happy land. The destructive spirit has been strong and powerful, and has already proved itself sharp as any two-edged sword. If it succeed, it will wrench from us one of the noblest prerogatives that can belong to humanity—the being governed according to the rules of a fixed, permanent and efficient Constitution. For a pure democracy combines the calamities of tyranny and anarchy, either of which is sufficient to bring death in the world and every woe. It is tyrannical because a man must follow the multitude, because he must live as his neighbours please to let him, and must form no opinions discordant with theirs. He is under the power of an extra-judicial and illegal influence, and can neither eat, nor drink, nor laugh, nor sing, nor arrange his household according to his own individual fancy or eccentricity, but according to their model, and without incurring their scorn. He has no security for the future, and may be forced to undo tomorrow, what he is forced to do today. It is a moveable and shifting state.

like the sands of a desert, exposed to every gale of humour and flood of sympathy. Nor is this the worst characteristic of a pure democracy. It is anarchy as well as tyranny. How can the laws be administered, when they who intend the violation of them have the power, *whenever they please, to remove the administrators*. What good man will undertake to execute them? How few persons will have the courage even to make the attempt? Ordinances may be framed and issued from time to time, commanding in a faint and feeble tone of voice the observance of the laws, but they seem to be considered as nothing more than mere advices, the following of which is regarded as a sort of favour hardly to be expected.

This is a state of things that may have subsisted not unsuitably to the United States of America hitherto, the population of which, as compared with the territory of that people, is as a thin and little flock on the face of a boundless prairie; but it cannot long subsist without serious disadvantages, when the population shall be multiplied—when the structure of their society shall become more artificial, and its interests more complicated; any sudden rush and pressure of the popular weight, may destroy in a moment that equal distribution of matter that now preserves its equilibrium. It is difficult to see how it can long continue in its present condition, being on the one hand without any provision of power for imposing additional restraint, and on the other hand without any greater disposition to submit to it; and in what manner this latter is to be produced, is a problem difficult to be demonstrated. Surely the late disturbances that have taken place on their frontiers, must have inspired the good men of that country with many uneasy apprehensions of their insecurity. They are certainly portentous of tribulations, because they have discovered weakness where strength is the very condition of political existence, and a tendency to confusion without power sufficient for the restoration of order. In a pure democracy, the mighty stream that carries round the wheel of innovation,—no one knows where or when it may stop, or with what fatal impetuosity it may roll along. Sooner or later the time for the reign of passion comes on, which conducts it to violence, and its latter end

Either this, or by far the majority of its members must be wise and virtuous beyond the degree of humanity, which is anticipating without warrant, the commencement of the Millenium. In seeking to assimilate the form of Government in these Colonies to that of the United States, it serves nothing, could it even be shown, that theirs have always yet worked well—it serves nothing, could it be made manifest upon the highest moral probabilities, that it will even continue to do so for many years to come; but if these probabilities lead to the opposite conclusion, besides the guilt of rebellion in the first instance, there is the guilt in addition, of striving to entail upon the land the curse of anarchy: to say nothing of the shame and calamity that will infallibly light upon the actors in a baffled rebellion. Why then should this country, the young daughter of a nation which is yet the great bulwark of the cause of God and men, marry herself to them on the other side of the river? Why more especially should she suffer herself to be spoiled by the discourteous and uncivil mob that have struck a league to spoil her? Why cast away her dower upon them? Let us rather have faith to believe

"That He, the Supreme Good, to whom all things ill
Are but as slavish Ministers of vengeance,
Would send a glistening guardian, if need were,
To keep Her life and honour unassailed."

Before the commencement of the Yonge Street insurrection, it is wonderful to think what security and civil order the administration of the laws had effected in so short a time. We had friendly *Bees* instead of fights,—what warfare there was, was only against the timber of our own lots. No man destroyed his neighbour's cattle, nor disturbed with his foot his neighbor's landmark. Among persons of different kindreds and tongues, it reminded one of the golden age, to see how easily people lived, and how ready to let others have the means of living—to hear their plans of improvement for the growing and grinding of corn, for building churches and founding cities. We may judge then from the effects of the gust of disorder that has already passed over us, what the consequences would be of a prevailing anarchy, when every man does what is

right in his own eyes. He would become the avenger of his own wrongs, and the arbitrator of his own dues. He would carry his point by pertinacity, by force, or by inspiring the fear of it. The churl and brutish person would always be sure to carry the day; and what else do they aim at who wantonly try to raise strife and rebellion in a country. They grasp at the lash and make an effort to get the whip-hand of others in the race of life. They wish to take by violence and wickedness what a peaceful state of society refuses to their wickedness; and for this object of course they must be their own rulers and judges and tax-gatherers. Their intolerance of the restraints of the laws, where no oppression exists—their angry denunciations of the rulers of the land, where no wrongs are perpetrated—what can these things mean? what is their source and signification, but jealousy and envy and selfishness and ambition. "Ah! thoughts of man accursed!" It is for these, that God turns a fruitful land into barrenness—for the wickedness of them that dwell therein. These are the passions that engender our woes—that stir up strife in the souls of brethren—spite, rapine and revenge—and anarchy is the high season of their swarming, when they come boldly forth from where they lay muffled up, into the light of the sun, till the hearts of men sicken, and the very earth is blighted. He that assists in the procuring such a state of things, invites the assassin* to his door and delivers himself up, his kindred and all that he has, into the hands of the ruffian.

There was a man whose family having taken counsel together, agreed to go forth into a far country. A kind father, he selected for them a guide, whom he rewarded out of his own stores, to keep them in the right way, and to constrain them by gentle means to be prosperous and happy. It came to pass, as they journeyed along,

* A few weeks ago, Capt. Usher, a gentleman of whose character his acquaintances speak in terms expressive of the highest esteem, was murdered in the lobby of his own house, by some individuals who came over the border for the express purpose of accomplishing his death. The murderer having completed this act of vengeance, is said, to have declared himself "to be satisfied"—the last satisfaction that remains in this life for him, whose spirit thenceforth is bound in the burning chain of an evil conscience;

"There's naught on earth has power to smite,
Like the curse in a dead man's eye."

that they grew impatient of the presence of their guide, suspicious of his intentions, and averse in all things to his interference. Nevertheless, they waxed fat and strong on the fruits of the valleys; and at the living springs of water by the way of which he led them, and wanted one thing alone, as they said, to render their happiness perfect, namely, to do "every one what was right in his own eyes." Wherefore rose they up against their guide to smite him with the edge of the sword, against whom, however, their attempt was hurtless, because their father had armed him with strong armor of proof. At length they prevailed so far as to force him to flee from them; and as he took his departure, wroth at their ingratitude, and pitying their errors, wild cries of joy rung through the forest; such a day of joy, they thought, they had never known. In the meantime, certain strangers from another country passing by, and happening to hear the voice of their mirth, came unto them, and being stronger than they, took possession of their substance. Being also, like them, addicted to their own will, they forced them to do whatsoever they pleased. Hungry and thirsty, these miserable men found not in all that country any city of habitation, save the cities of these strangers.

But concerning these things, it is unnecessary, at present, to insist further. Neither is it requisite to try your patience by advertising to the necessity of submission to the restraints of law for the religious and spiritual well-being of Society. The truth is, that it is the happiness of the country that gave you birth, that her children are trained to submission to lawful authority, as well as to the perception of constitutional right. It is a matter that has been engraved upon the heart of the nation by many a bloody scar. They reckon an adherence to it sacred as well as honorable. If you inherit anything of that love of order and subordination which it is natural to expect as due from you, now is the time for its exemplification. This is expected as your duty, as well as required by your interests. You have nothing to expect from anarchy but its calamities; and this, I am well aware, is your profound persuasion. Let no destructive spirit, begotten by the plagues of the times, infect you. Be the

advocates and constructive workmen of subordination and constitutional authority, though your complaints in a matter that seems intimately to concern you, may be just. To these complaints it is scarcely thought necessary to allude, because there is little reason to doubt, from many indications sufficiently visible to him who gives himself the trouble to observe them, that the members of the Church of Scotland in this province are likely enough to grow with its growth, and strengthen with its strength. The day of their redemption will always continue to draw nearer and nearer. I rest satisfied in this, that if peace be maintained—that if a strong and upright Government shall administer the Constitution—that if the country be preserved from the horrors of anarchy and republican misrule—that this race remains immortal. “*Hoc genus manet immortale.*” It contains in itself the means of its own preservation. But there is a matter which ought to concern us far more closely than this,—the preservation from confusion and lawless misrule of this fair country, that has become our home and the spring of our hopes. Let every man, who is not a destructive and pseudo-patriot, but a lover of God and of the order and subordination by which God preserves the harmony of all things, lend to the powers that be the shoulder of his might. Things will jostle right if only the name and sense of *right* be preserved. In this case there may be reasonable expectation, that notwithstanding the ignorance and disorder that heavily press upon the land, there may one day be presented the glorious spectacle of a people holding forth with prosperous effect the light of truth and the Sceptre of lawful power. This is an end that might well deserve to become our “last dream at night, and first vision in the morning.” Nor is this a thing to be altogether despaired of. The proud and loyal men of England, They of Ireland so well tried and honorably distinguished, and the Sons of our own country, whose deeds of late require no one to speak their praise—these are many, and combined, would be invincible; for thrice are they armed whose cause is just, the cause of God and of humanity, which is also His; at any rate, Heaven has decreed that the servants of a righteous cause shall surely be blessed, whether or not they prevail: and if the time ever come when these sentiments, which he has

hastily, and almost from the impulse of the moment, expressed, shall sicken and expire, the prayer of the Chaplain of the St. Andrew's Society is, that the last throb of them may exist in a Scottish heart. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Be happy all the days of your mortal life, and may God crown your mortality with immortal joys.

AMEN.

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